United Nations A/70/88

General Assembly

Distr.: General
27 May 2015

Original: English

Seventieth session
Item 114 (e) of the preliminary list*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 22 May 2015 from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Office of the President of the General Assembly and has the honour to refer to the candidature of the Republic of Korea for election to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the 2016-2018 term at the elections to be held during the seventieth session of the General Assembly in New York (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations would like to request the Office of the President of the General Assembly to have the present note and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

* A/70/50.

15-08237 (E) 110615

Please recycle

Annex to the note verbale dated 22 May 2015 from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of the Republic of Korea to the Human Rights Council, 2016-2018

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

I. Introduction

1. Having served as a member of the Human Rights Council from 2006 to 2011 and from 2013 to 2015, the Republic of Korea has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2016-2018 at the elections to be held during the seventieth session of the General Assembly in 2015.

2. The Republic of Korea firmly believes that the respect for human rights is indispensable for sustainable development. With lessons learned confirming such conviction, the Republic of Korea is committed to sharing its experience and making greater contributions to the promotion and protection of human rights around the world.

3. The Republic of Korea has ratified and implemented the following seven core international human rights treaties and most of the Optional Protocols:

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1979)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1985) and its Optional Protocol (2006)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1990)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1990) and its Optional Protocol (1990)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) and its Optional Protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2004)
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1995)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2009).

4. The Republic of Korea has also ratified and implemented the following conventions: the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction and the Maritime Labour Convention of the International Labour Organization.

5. The Republic of Korea has sought to ensure the advancement of human rights for its minorities and the socially vulnerable in the following ways:

- Revision of laws concerning the protection of children and juveniles from sexual abuse and the punishment of sexual crimes (2013)

- Revision of the Child Welfare Act for better prevention of child abuse and protection of the rights of children and the enactment of relevant laws to prevent physical, sexual and psychological abuse of children and to ensure victims' access to justice and stronger punishment of the perpetrators (2014)
- Establishment of the National Action Plan in 2014 to provide a framework for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, and its subsequent and related resolutions
- Drawing up comprehensive policy plans to protect vulnerable groups through the first basic plan for Children Policy for the period 2015-2019, the second basic plan for immigration policy for the period 2013-2017 and the fourth basic plan for women policy for the period 2013-2017).

6. The Republic of Korea underwent its second Universal Periodic Review in 2012 in an open and constructive manner, and conducted a review of the recommendations made during an interactive dialogue within the National Human Rights Policy Council. The accepted recommendations are incorporated into the second National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

7. The National Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea was established in 2001 in compliance with the Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions. The Commission investigates instances of discrimination and human rights violations, provides access to remedies, promotes human rights education, raises awareness of human rights and provides human rights-related policy recommendations.

II. Pledges and commitments

8. In line with its dedication to the noble aim of promoting and protecting human rights, the Republic of Korea commits itself to further advancing human rights at the national level by:

(a) Upholding the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights, with a strong commitment to human rights as a universal value;

(b) Implementing the provisions of the international human rights instruments at the national level and taking the following steps with respect to the withdrawal of reservations made to the human rights instruments in line with the recent advancement of human rights in the Republic of Korea, including legal amendments and institutional developments in a wide array of fields:

- Ratifying the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (The Palermo Protocol)
- Considering the withdrawal of its reservations to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (article 25, para. (e)) and to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (article 21, para. (a))
- Considering the ratification of the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption
- Examining the possibility of becoming a party to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances

- Examining the possibility of accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

(c) Strengthening the implementation of the second National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights for the period 2012-2016, which covers 221 human rights-related obligations. The plan outlines the commitment of the Republic of Korea towards better human rights protection in line with its international human rights obligations. The third National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights for the period 2017-2020 will be developed in 2016 in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders;

(d) Strengthening efforts to promote and protect the rights of minorities and the socially vulnerable, women, children and youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, victims of crime, refugees and persons with a history of illness;

(e) Enhancing cooperation and partnership with civil society for the advancement of human rights and good governance;

(f) Strengthening human rights education and training in various fields such as schools, universities, public offices, military bases and enterprises to enhance public awareness and thereby incorporate human rights into the mainstream in all sectors of society.

9. In line with its aim of promoting and protecting human rights, the Republic of Korea commits itself to further advancing human rights at the international level by:

(a) Closely cooperating with the international community to advance human rights and address human rights violations around the world, with a strong commitment to promoting and protecting human rights as a universal value;

(b) Cooperating with other Member States in their implementation of human rights obligations through various mechanisms such as technical cooperation, exchanges of experts and the sharing of experiences and best practices;

(c) Cooperating at the bilateral level as well as through the United Nations system to strengthen democracy, good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(d) Promoting and consolidating democracy by providing technical expertise and financial support to countries requesting assistance in building democratic institutions and by playing an active role in the work of the Community of Democracies as a member of its governing council;

(e) Incorporating a human rights perspective into its development cooperation policies and programmes, which can contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights, democracy and good governance in partner countries.

10. The Republic of Korea will contribute to the work of the Human Rights Council by:

(a) Playing an active role in human rights advocacy around the world by constructively participating in a wide range of discussions to promote all aspects of human rights;

(b) Remaining constructively engaged in the activities of the Human Rights Council and supporting the fulfilment of its mandate and functions;

(c) Continuing its close collaboration with other Member States to make the Human Rights Council an efficient and effective body that responds to urgent situations of human rights violations in a prompt and effective manner;

(d) Cooperating with the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, to which the Republic of Korea has extended a standing invitation, by rendering its full support for such a visit;

(e) Strengthening its efforts to further improve the effectiveness of the Universal Periodic Review through constructive engagement in it and through dialogue with States under review;

(f) Cooperating and working closely with human rights treaty bodies, intensifying efforts to implement their recommendations and ensuring the timely submission of national reports in full compliance with the human rights instruments to which the Republic of Korea is a party;

(g) Rendering its full support to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in its mandate to elevate standards of human rights observance and advance human rights on the ground;

(h) Contributing to the effective operation of a field-based structure of the OHCHR in the Republic of Korea, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 25/25 on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.